

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: FRENCH MEDIA REACTION TO NIXON WATERGATE SPEECH

1. NO MAJOR EDITORIAL REACTION IN FRENCH MEDIA TO PRESIDENT NIXON'S WEDNESDAY NIGHT RADIO-TELEVISION ADDRESS ON WATERGATE. MOST COMMENT IS INCLUDED IN BODY OF NEWS STORIES FILED BY US-BASED CORRESPONDENTS. GENERAL OPINION IS THAT SPEECH CONTAINED NO SURPRISES, OR ANYTHING NEW AND IS THUS UNLIKELY SATISFY CRITICS OF DOUBTERS WHILE IT REMAINS BE SEEN WHETHER PUBLIC WILL RALLY BEHIND PRESIDENT.

2. FIRST NETWORK FRENCH TELEVISION PRIME-TIME NEWSCAST THURSDAY SAID ADDRESS WAS "A SPEECH WITHOUT SURPRISE" AND THAT MAJORITY OF AMERICANS WERE DISAPPOINTED BECAUSE IT CONTAINED NOTHING NEW. THE SPEECH DOESN'T CHANGE ANYTHING, THE COMMENTATOR SAID. NETWORK TWO TOOK SIMILAR LINE AND SAID IT REMAINS BE SEEN WHETHER SPEECH WILL RAISE PRESIDENT'S CURRENT LOW POPULARITY RATING.

3. UNDER HEADLINE "NO NEW ELEMENT", LE MONDE CORRESPONDENT HENRI PIERRE SAYS BOTH THOSE EXPECTING A MOVING PERSONAL PLEA AND THOSE HOPING FOR FRANK DETAILED EXPLANATIONS WERE DISAPPOINTED. PIERRE SAYS IT REMAINS BE SEEN WHETHER SILENT MASSES WILL RALLY BEHIND PRESIDENT. WHILE REACTION OF GENERAL PUBLIC IS UNDERTAIN, PIERRE COMMENTS, PRESIDENT'S ADVERSARIES ARE ALREADY REACTING UNFAVORABLY, ARGUING THAT NIXON STUCK TO GENERALITIES AND DID

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NOT REFUTE OR COMMENT ON TESTIMONE BEFORE SENATE COMMITTEE.

4. FRANCE SOIR CORRESPONDENT FILING FROM HOUSTON SAID THERE WAS NOTHING NEW IN SPEECH. COMBAT SAYS SPEECH IS FAR FROM HAVING REGULATED WATERGATE CRISIS AND THAT CLIMATE OF DOUBT CONTINUES TO WEIGH ON U.S. COMBAT COMMENTS THAT PRESIDENT'S ENTOURAGE BELIEVES TIME IS ON HIS SIDE DUE TO GROWING PUBLIC LASSITUDE WITH WATERGATE AFFAIR.

5. COMMUNIST L'HUMANITE SAYS "IN SHORT AND AS WAS EXPECTED MR. NIXON SPOKE IN ORDER TO SAY NOTHING OR RATHER IN ORDER TO SAY NO (REGARDING RELEASE OF TAPES)." AURORE TAKES GENERALLY MORE PROSITIVE TONE THAN OTHER NEWSPAPERS CALLING SPEECH A MORAL MEA-CULPA DONE WITH THE ASSURANCE AND GOOD-WILL OF A MAN WHO IS SURE HE HAS NOTHING TO REPROACH HIMSELF FOR ON THE STRICTLY LEGAL PLANE. AURORE SAYS SPEECH DISAPPOINTED THE POLITICAL WORLD IN WASHINGTON BECAUSE IT CONTAINED NOTHING NEW BUT AMERICAN OPINION WILL PROBABLY GIVE THE PRESIDENT'S APPEAL A BETTER WELCOME THAN THE WASHINGTON CROWS.

6. IN FIGARO, NICOLAS CHATELAIN SAYS THAT SPEECH WAS "NATURALLY" DISAPPOINTING AND QUESTIONS WHETHER IT COULD HAVE BEEN OTHERWISE, COMMENTING THAT WITHOUT PROVIDING PROOF OF HIS INNOCENCE, PRESIDENT WAS REDUCED TO EXPRESSING GOOD SENTIMENTS. IN SAME PAPER, JACQUES JACQUET-FRANCILLON SAYS PRESIDENT SOUGHT LESS TO CONVINCE HIS VIEWERS THAN TO APPEAL TO THEIR COMMON SENSE. JACQUET-FRANCILLON STRESSES THAT NIXON DEFENDED HIMSELF VERY BADLY BUT WONDERES WHETHER HE COULD HAVE DONE OTHERWISE. HE CONCLUDES THAT PRESIDENT KNOWS HE NOW HAS A PROBATIONARY PERIOD WHICH HE MAY BE ABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AND THAT THE MAJORITY OF HIS FELLOW CITIZENS, EVEN IF THEY AREN'T SAYING SO PUBLICLY, PROBABLY HOPE SO TOO. STONE

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